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NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



MORAVIAN MISSIONS FOR LEPERS

BY A MORAVIAN NURSE

UNTIL 1865 the condition of the lepers of Jerusalem had changed but little from what was common in New Testament times. Then a philanthropic German baroness and her husband obtained means of establishing an asylum, which was built in 1867 near the Jaffa gate. Starting the institution, however, proved to be an easier undertaking than getting inmates. Not that there were not enough that needed the offered help, but they were suspicious. They did not believe that such work would be begun purely from charitable motives. Their bigotry made them suspect a scheme to change their religion. In course of time prejudice was conquered, and the number of patients under treatment has risen to sixty. The founders of the home for lepers enlisted the interest of a Moravian bishop, who won many friends for the cause. Moravian missionaries were placed in charge of the home in its early days; the work has been carried on by others of the same church; and since 1879 it has been managed by a board appointed by the Moravian General Synod.

The old hospital has been replaced by a new and commodious stone building, called "Jesus-Help," surrounded by a large garden, nearer the city gate. The staff of the home consists of the missionary and four deaconesses (trained nurses), and two untrained Sisters to do most of the general housework.

Last August occurred the death of the faithful superintendent, who had labored there for seventeen years. After that a change of management appeared to be necessary, so it was decided to leave the management of the hospital itself entirely in the hands of the Sisters, with Sister Elizabeth Mueller as superior, who has been in it for eighteen years. Mr. Bayer has been made steward of the home, having the garden and field work under his supervision, attending to the repairs of the buildings and being the legal representative in Jerusalem. To give the poor lepers physical and spiritual service, to offer them a bright and comfortable refuge for body and soul, and, as far as it may be possible under the peculiar circumstances, to introduce them to "Jesus-

Help" in the highest sense, will remain in future, as in the past, the chief object of the Leper Home.

Several years ago, when Emperor William of Germany was travelling through Palestine, he paid a visit to the Leper Home, was much impressed by all he saw, and on his return to Germany, sent as a gift to the home a much needed disinfecting machine. Until the advent of this machine the nurses had washed all the bandages.

A traveller visiting the home in recent years remarked that the nurses there were the most cheerful looking people he had ever seen. A new cure for leprosy,—a serum discovered in Constantinople,—is being tried in "Jesus-Help," but no results are as yet apparent.

In South America, at Groot-Chatillon, on the Surinam River, the "Bethesda Home for Lepers" was founded in 1898, where the Moravian mission, in conjunction with the Protestant churches of the colony of Surinam, cares for the sick both bodily and spiritually. The Moravian church has pledged itself to furnish the missionary workers for this charity, and the trained nurses (four deaconesses). The costs of the undertaking, including the erection and maintenance of the buildings, are a charge upon an association representing the various Protestant congregations of Parimaribo. The enterprise is not a governmental undertaking.

Extensive alterations have been made at Bethesda during the last two years to meet the increasing demand for admission. In the Government Asylum the Protestant patients are dying out, and not being replaced by new ones; Bethesda is becoming full, and a good spirit prevails among the patients.

The Moravian Mission of West Cape Colony, South Africa, undertook the management of the Leper Asylum at Hemelen Aarde, in 1823, which had been begun by the government, and was moved to Robben Island in 1846. It remained in Moravian hands until 1868.

In German East Central Africa, in the Nyasa district, near Rungeve and Isoko, there are leper settlements, and a station for lepers has been established at Maketa, on land belonging to the mission at Rungeve, the missionaries undertaking the supervision of this work. Two years ago there were twenty-five dwellings, twenty of which were occupied. These contained sixty inmates, of whom fifty were lepers. A native Christian is in charge of the station, but of the nursing I have no knowledge. The isolation of lepers is an idea not foreign to the people in their original state; but now these poor sufferers have the benefit of Christian ministrations and help. The costs of this colony are borne by the government.

A recent record showed nearly twelve hundred lepers on Molokai, one of the Hawaiian Islands, of which nine hundred and eighty-four were natives, sixty-two half-castes, thirty-two Chinese, and five Americans. Here the victims of this dread disease live in their charnal house as dead to the world as those under the ground. A vigilant health board and the gradual purging of the old native stock, by death or by cleaner living, are showing their results in the diminishing, slowly, of this plague. These miserable people are ministered to by faithful missionaries (Roman Catholics), mostly of American birth, for the American is strangely immune.

THE SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF LEPROSY

AN announcement which may be of far-reaching importance was made at the Congress on Tropical Diseases at Bombay, by Captain Williams, residency surgeon at Bushire, who delivered an address on leprosy. Referring to the reported cure of a Maori leper in New Zealand by the treatment introduced by Dr. Deycke, of Constantinople, and consisting of the injection of a culture of the bacillus of leprosy, Captain Williams announced that as the result of eight months' treatment by the Deycke-Nastin method he had cured two lepers. Two others were practically cured, and a fifth showed remarkable improvement.

Only those who have lived in countries where leprosy is prevalent can realize the misery which would be abolished if a cure were found.—*British Journal of Nursing*.

A STORY from Tennessee. "A doctor told me this: A rich old woman was his patient; she needed a nurse, which he told her she should have. 'Wal, doctor,' she said, 'I hearn of them thar things a whole lot, but I never yet have felt able to wait upon one.'"

F. H. D.